

**BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEETING**  
**September 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012**  
**AmericInn, Fort Pierre, SD**

**Members present:** Elaine Roberts, Kathy Hassebrook, Joe Rehurek, Nikki Darland, Craig Eschenbaum, Grady Kickul, Brett Glirbas, Melissa Flor, Robert Kean, Lyle Cook, Barb Storbeck, Carol Kirchgesler, Matt Cain, and Darla McGuire. **Member absent:** Leo Hallan. **Others present:** Bernie Grimme, Colette Wagoner, Faith Korkow, Rich Eschenbaum, Liz Fabiano and Laurie Gill. Interpreters were Bobbie Jo Yost and Julie Paluch.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:** Elaine Roberts, Chairperson, called the meeting to order. She welcomed members to Fort Pierre and explained that she would hold introductions until our first guest arrived. Staff reported that Leo Hallan had notified them that he was unable to attend. **OPENING ACTIONS:** The Chair reminded members of the meeting protocol which is attached to the draft agenda. Next, she moved to the draft agenda and asked if there were additions or changes. Grady asked to add several items under the Director's Report, an update on the Due Process Program Guide and an introduction of Liz Fabiano and the training she is providing to Division staff. Upon no further changes **MOTION (M) TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED, SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C).**

Next Elaine confirmed all had received the mailings from staff, with the previous meeting minutes, due to a lack of a quorum at the June meeting. She asked if there were any changes or additions to be made to the March 22/23, 2012 meeting. Hearing none, **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MARCH 22-23, 2012 MEETING MINUTES AS PUBLISHED – MSC.**

Executive Committee meeting minutes for May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012, needed approved. After confirming all had copies, there were no changes or additions. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MAY 22, 2012 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES AS PUBLISHED – MSC.** Elaine moved to the June 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes, asking for any changes or additions. Hearing none, **MOTION TO APPROVE THE JUNE 6-7, 2012 ABERDEEN MEETING MINUTES AS PUBLISHED – MSC.**

**TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:** Staff shared a Thank You card from Derrold, Peggy, and Preston Waltner regarding the Dare to Dream Conference and the Board's financial support (see attachment).

Elaine brought copies of 'The Circuit', South Dakota Parent Connection's fall newsletter (see attachment). She explained SD Parent Connection offered training via DDNs and online, utilizing Transition Services Liaison Project staff, Cindy Kirschman. She thanked the Division and the Office of Special Education for their assistance with the provision of Cindy's time.

Elaine had copies of the Family Resource Guide to share, and mentioned it is also available in Spanish. She also announced that they had partnered on Person Centered Thinking (PCT) training with Melisa Flor and over twenty special education educators, and offered graduate credits. She also shared that SD Parent Connection received a two-year grant funded through the Division of Developmental Disabilities, targeting Native Americans residing on the reservations – offering the topics of Families Planning Together (FPT) and transition age topics.

The Chair asked for other public comment, and hearing none, moved to the guest speaker.

**INTRODUCTION OF LAURIE R. GILL, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES:** Elaine and Grady welcomed Secretary Gill, thanking her for attending. Elaine held off on introductions pending Gill's arrival; and she asked everyone to add one thing about serving on the Board. Common answers were networking, partnerships, sharing of resources and other opportunities of coming together.

Secretary Laurie Gill thanked everyone for having her visit today, stating it is easier when the meetings are located in Pierre/Ft. Pierre, but she has been visiting offices around the state. Gill shared her vision of the Department's Strategic Planning. When she first came to this job, the entire department was transitioning through a re-organization. A facilitator was hired to work with the management team to look at internal efficiencies and how to work better on basic organizational goals. A five year plan has been developed outlining a few manageable objectives. The plan will be shared with the Board and other councils for input. The hope is that something will be in print by the December meeting. Secretary Gill stressed this long range plan will take much dialogue, and that all persons involved need a voice. Gill stated that as a Department, strides are being made to come together like this, and she is pleased with the initial progress.

Gill moved onto the upcoming Legislative Session. Last year she explained, DHS had introduced very few bills, but for the 2013 session she is expecting more on "red-tape" issues or clean up bills. A staff attorney has been hired by DHS, Grant

Flynn, and he's reviewing what can be repealed and other possible changes. The Department's proposed bill will be released through the proper channels and include boards and councils for input and/or recommendations.

A member inquired about the state's stand on the Re-authorization of the Rehabilitation Act. Grady explained that both the Division and Department support the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act in addition to the Workforce Investment Act. Grady shared that no action will most likely occur until after the November elections. Secretary Gill agreed, we support it, and suspect it won't happen soon.

Gill asked if there were further questions, and hearing none; she added that she will attend the Pierre/Fort Pierre National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) event Monday morning, October 15<sup>th</sup>. She will also attend the Governor's Awards Ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda, followed by the reception on the same day. She is also planning to attend the Fall Conference in Spearfish.

She offered a challenge to members and other boards/councils of brainstorming ideas on how to hold more employment events like NDEAM throughout the entire year. She offered the suggestion of having time built into each meeting's agenda for "brainstorming". Lyle Cook invited Secretary Gill to their Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe NDEAM event, Wednesday October 24<sup>th</sup>, in Eagle Butte. Gill replied she will have to check calendars, but if available, she would try her best to attend.

Barb Storbeck mentioned to Gill the Disability Employment Initiative program in Rapid City, a grant from Department of Labor. She added that Gloria Plummer is doing a great job with consumers. Grady agreed and added that the Board will invite Gloria to attend a future meeting and present details of the program.

Gill thanked everyone for their time. She believes strong boards and councils are creating stable foundations of knowledge and networking. As she departed, Secretary Gill thanked members for their continued service and commitment to the employment of people with disabilities. Members thanked her for attending.

**LIZ FABIANO, TRAINER:** Grady took this opportunity to ask the Chair permission for Bernie to introduce the consultant/trainer that the Division has hired. Grady explained that he asked her to give members a brief overview of her training series.

Bernie spoke to the training that Liz Fabiano is conducting with VR counselors – offering them tools/strategies and motivation strategies. Liz is a professional criminologist known for developing and implementing successful programs for

rehabilitating criminal offenders, and more recently for her work in motivational change. She was a presenter at last year's Fall Conference, and her message was well received. Bernie welcomed and introduced Liz Fabiano.

Ms. Fabiano thanked Bernie, Grady and the Division for the opportunity to share her training plans with the counselors. Liz talked about being a criminologist, and becoming a behavioral change expert. She's helped create a program to assist counselors use cognitive motivational tools, to help them negotiate behavior change with consumers. A common theme when VR is assisting someone with obtaining employment is that person might not be motivated to change, to want to work. Counselors need to fully understand what this change may be for the person, how to use motivational tools to assist clients to create internal desires. They learn to use reflective listening, and learn to roll with resistance; how to elicit change-talk statements from a client, and negotiate for them to want to change. VR Counselors are learning they can help structure that internal change within a client and create a readiness from within. The change will never happen if the client does not believe or accept in his/her heart that they want to change and agree to it internally. The focus is teaching skills to counselors, to help find the hidden motivators, or outside motivators affecting the consumer's reluctance for change.

Fabiano praised the Division and said the Board should be proud that the agency has taken on this training initiative. It is apparent the Division wants the best outcome for consumers, and understands the most powerful tool they have are the VR counselors.

A member asked how this training will be measured, that it seems very subjective. Liz said there are ways to measure progress (i.e. psychometric measures). Any little noticeable advancement can help a counselor; move the consumer from point A to point B. Another question asked was whether this training concept is considered compatible with Person Centered Thinking (PCT). Grady said he feels that these two concepts "fit" together, though they are delivered differently.

Bernie added that the Division did their homework before hiring Ms. Fabiano, and felt this mindset would work more effectively with other state systems like Division on Developmental Disabilities and transition programs. The Division is committed to helping counselors grow which will assist consumers change and become gainfully employed. Liz finished by stating this training is an extremely long, detailed process, and it won't happen overnight, it will take a change of the counselor's mindset too. Liz thanked Bernie and the Division again for bringing her to the state; she looks forward to seeing things progress as the training continues.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Elaine returned to the agenda item of Public Comment, asking if there was further comment. Barb Storbeck told members she attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Black Hills Brain Injury Conference in Rapid City. One of the speakers was an attorney named Steven Benvenisti. He spoke of a case involving a college student who had everything, and was struck by a drunk driver, and he suffered a significant traumatic brain injury (TBI). Steven chronicled the struggles this student and his family endured, and how subsequently he devoted his own entire legal career to representing victims with TBIs. He revealed that the student in the case is himself, and he understands first-hand how someone needs to be there to fight for rights of TBI victims. Barb added if anyone has a chance, they should try to hear him speak.

Elaine called for further Public Comment. A member inquired as to what is the intent of 'Public Comment' on the agenda, asking if it is for members to announce or report on things, or for clarification, or can it be utilized by others not appointed to the Board? Elaine said that there was a time, people wanted to bring forward an issue to the Board, and needed to know a time when they could have the floor. Hence it became a standing agenda item, frequently held early in the meeting to allow people to attend, express their topic, and then feel free to leave, and not wait the entire duration of the meeting to be recognized.

Another questioned the length of time it could take to address the board, if too long, should it be an item built into the agenda. Elaine agreed, if a member is planning to bring something forward at a meeting, and they think it will generate a lot of discussion, they should contact staff, explain the topic, or at least bring it forward to the Executive Committee for consideration.

It was also suggested that during opening actions, when the meeting's draft agenda is approved, this would be a time for members to offer additional items and officially get it on the agenda, again vs. doing it during Public Comment. The standing agenda item called, 'Other Business' is another area where issues could be added. Discussion continued whether this should be a topic to clarify through a committee - to propose some ground rules for the use of the Public Comment period on meeting agendas timeframes - and to bring back to the Board for review. **MOTION TO REFER THE TOPIC OF "PUBLIC COMMENT" TO THE CONSUMER SERVICES COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER REFINEMENT – MSC.**

**BREAK**

**DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Director's Comments:** Grady first reported that he would not be able to attend in the morning. Next, Grady provided a handout featuring a story about Brett Glirbas for members to read (see attached). Grady mentioned that the State Plan was finally approved by RSA. He publically thanked Bernie for his hard work on this mission, and working with RSA staff to ensure everything was completed to their satisfaction.

Grady mentioned the current topic being heard a lot lately in the media is sequestration. If Congress doesn't reach an agreement by the first of the year, there are rules in place to automatically make cuts in federal spending in an attempt to balance the budget. South Dakota could be looking at possible cuts as high as 7%. This is termed a "Lame Duck Congress" when they're caught in the timeframe when zero voting occurs immediately prior to elections. Grady reported that if those proposed cuts did come to fruition, the 7% will have to come out of client services. Grady said he is hopeful that something will be done by the first part of the year.

**Follow-up on the RSA On-site Visit:** Grady reminded members that they were a part of the review by having the conference call with Charles Sadler, Rehabilitation Services Administration staff member last summer. The Division received a draft report, although a bit late, and then RSA reported they sent the wrong report. The Division waited for the correct one and it finally arrived. It did have some "findings" that the Division had to address. The rebuttal draft was returned to them for their approval of proposed fixes, and it's been an on-going slow affair. He will keep the Board informed of the progress.

**DRS Budget Update:** Grady announced that the 2012 fiscal budget year came to a close June 30<sup>th</sup>. The Division ended with a bit of a surplus, which allowed the Division to purchase \$150,000 worth of ramps and parts through contracts with Springfield Corrections Facility. The Centers for Independent Living will provide the ramps to consumers they serve over the next year or so.

Grady reported that DHS had their budget request meeting with the Governor's office, and that the Division is only asking for a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for the VR program, otherwise if not approved it will be level funded. Again, if the sequestration occurs, it will not affect the current year of 2012-13, but it will affect FY 2013-14. A member inquired about COLA, and Grady explained that it is federally mandated in the Rehabilitation Act, they must build in an inflationary adjustment for VR case services to offset the increased program costs incurred.

**Survey of Parents with Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:** Grady reported that a survey was released in early June, which was a collaborative project between the Board of Regents, SD School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the SD School for the Deaf. The survey was disseminated via mail to 400 parents of children ages birth to 21, who are deaf or hard of hearing. The instrument contains 45 questions, modeled after the Office of Special Education Indicator 14 survey. It also asks about demographics, education, family dynamics, trainings, and other social and emotional issues of children with hearing loss.

As of the first mailing, 171 surveys were returned, a 47.7% response rate, which is fairly good. The second push, 119 more surveys came in, which boosted the overall response rate to 60%; which is considered "highly reliable" survey error rate of only + or - 3% either way. Ann Larson, DOE, says that they will be trying to compile preliminary results before the end of the year, but it's not clear yet when it will be released to the public. Members expressed an interest in reviewing the results.

**Board Appointments:** Grady explained the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, only had one individuals' term expire, Matt Cain's term was ending, but he was eligible to serve another term, if reappointed. Matt agreed to serve a second term and was reappointed. Grady thanked Matt for his continued commitment. As of next year though, terms will end for Lyle Cook, Nikki Darland, and Brett Glirbas.

**Governor's Awards:** Grady reported that the 2012 Governor's Awards ceremony will be Monday, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm, in the Capitol Building Rotunda, Pierre. Staff shared a handout (see attachment) with the different awards categories and recipients. Grady added that DHS Secretary Gill will provide the welcome and introduce the Governor. The Governor will be available to present the recipients their awards. Following the awards ceremony, there will be a reception with light refreshments at the Capitol Lake Visitor's Center. Like usual, all members are encouraged to attend if able to do so. That same morning, on the 15<sup>th</sup>, is the Pierre/Fort Pierre NDEAM Geri Jewell presentation at the AmericInn in Fort Pierre. The registration fee for that portion is \$20. Everyone's welcome to attend, please contact staff about reimbursement for travel expenses.

An inquiry was made as to whether the Governor's Awards schedule will be moved to having it earlier in the year, or will it stay with this timeframe. Grady replied that he thinks they may try to go back to earlier in the year (June or July), but it's always based on the Governor's schedule.

**Freedom to Work (FTW) Sustainability:** Grady reported that initially the Benefit Specialists in the state were funded by the Work Incentives Payment Assistance (WIPA) program. But this past year, Social Security funding was not reauthorized. SD was one of the few states where monies were identified to continue the program, the funding came through the Division. If the Social Security Administration does not refund the program the Division will most likely keep it going. The Division realizes the importance of this program and the services provided are valuable to South Dakotans beneficiaries.

**PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS –** Grady explained that no action was taken at the June meeting due to the lack of a quorum. On behalf of the Executive Committee, Grady reviewed the proposed slate of officers for the Board's consideration. He also explained that nominations will be taken from the floor for each position.

The Executive Committee proposes Elaine Roberts as Chairperson. Grady asked for any other nominations for Chairperson, once more for nominations for Chairperson. Third, and final call for nominations for Chairperson. Hearing none, **MOTION IN FAVOR OF ELAINE ROBERTS AS CHAIRPERSON –MSC.**

The Executive Committee proposes Craig Eschenbaum as Vice-Chairperson. Grady asked for other nominations for Vice-Chairperson, once more for nominations for Vice-Chairperson. Third and final call for further nominations for Vice-Chairperson. Hearing none, **MOTION IN FAVOR OF CRAIG ESCHENBAUM AS VICE-CHAIRPERSON – MSC.**

The Executive Committee proposes Brett Glirbas as Member-at-Large. Grady asked for other nominations for Member-at-Large, once more for nominations for Member-at-Large. Third and final call for further nominations for Member-at-Large. Hearing none, **MOTION IN FAVOR OF BRETT GLIRBAS AS MEMBER-AT-LARGE - MSC.**

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC) –** Grady reported that the SILC met September 12<sup>th</sup> in Fort Pierre. A discussion item was the Assistive Technology Re-Use Work Group. The Division of Social Services (DSS) is writing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a vendor or agency to take on the project of locating, retrieving, organizing, refurbishing, and reissuing durable medical equipment. Millions of Medicaid dollars have been spent on durable medical equipment in SD that is no longer in use, and this is an attempt to gather gently used equipment, refurbish it and disseminate it to individuals who could utilize it at a reasonable cost.



Organizations or agencies may bid on this RFP, a couple of hospitals are interested, durable medical companies, as well as DakotaLink are considering submitting a proposal. Grady will keep the Board informed on this process.

Another discussion item during the SILC meeting was the homelessness conference, the annual homeless statewide count, and the growing issues that crossover into the VR or IL areas. A large percentage of the homeless are children, and there's much to be done. The SD Housing Development Authority is also focused on this troubling issue, so this topic will continue with discussion and seeking solutions. The next SILC meeting will be Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, with a new member orientation taking place the prior afternoon, in Fort Pierre.

**STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL** – Grady reported that the Council met on June 31<sup>st</sup>, but he was unable to attend. Grady mentioned a topic of interest for the BVR would be the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant. (contact person is Gloria Plummer, Black Hills Special Services Cooperative, BHSSC). In partnership with the Department of Labor and Regulation, BHSSC received a grant to assist students with disabilities. This grant will provide an array of case management services to a specific number of students. It is designed to track students long-term, to determine the benefit of transition services. He added that a presentation is scheduled during the Fall Conference. Again, Grady suggested having staff check on Gloria's availability to discuss the program in more detail at the next meeting.

**TECHNOLOGY UPDATE** – Grady explained that the information he shared regarding the Assistive Technology Re-Use Work Group basically covered this topic. An inquiry was made regarding the incentive for a consumer to accept or use the used equipment. Grady replied there should be greater availability now on certain items, cost less, and possibly a quicker turn accessing the equipment. On the other hand, if you have equipment to donate, benefits are de-cluttering, being green and helping others. And there is equipment that Medicare will not purchase. He added there will be a PR campaign to educate the public on how it will work and the benefits involved. Recipients of the refurbished equipment do not *have* to be Medicaid consumers, but those persons *will* get first choice. As stated earlier, as the RFP award is granted to an agency or organization, and the program takes off, details will be provided.

**BREAK**

**DUE PROCESS PROGRAM GUIDE** – Grady reminded members this was an item he asked to add and turned it over to Bernie. He shared a handout (see attachment) the draft program guide from DRS outlining the updated Due Process Procedures and how it will be implemented. Bernie explained there were changes approved for the administrative rules review process for due process. The rules revolved around 90 day timeframes, which led to missed review hearings and other factors which delayed the process. He shared a slide that showed the modified due process in a flow chart. He explained that individuals will only have 30 days from the decision or denial to submit a request for due process review, 10 days after the Administration Review, 10 days after any Mediation, and that a Fair Hearing has to take place within a 60 day overall time period. The Board has reviewed this previously and provided feedback, as well as the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. If members would have further questions or feedback after reviewing the program guide, he will take this input to the Consumer Services Committee's next meeting. Bernie stated that over 3,500 postcards have been mailed already to VR consumers past and present in SD with these new guidelines and he only received one phone call with questions.

Robert Kean asked permission to return to the topic of the RSA On-Site Review. Robert stated that he had been interviewed by RSA staff and he was curious to know if any of his comments made it into the reports or not, and if there will be an opportunity to read the comments or only the final report? Bernie replied that he thought only the final report will be available. He added that RSA has shared a few of the questions with them because they asked for further clarification, or information, or explanations on why things were done a certain way. But none of the comments related to anything anyone else had said in interviews. Bernie offered that if members had other questions they may call him.

The Chair noted being at the end of today's agenda and asked the groups' permission to continue on with tomorrow's items or break early? Consensus was to continue on yet today.

#### **BVR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S UPDATE:**

**Follow-up Report on Dare to Dream Conference:** Colette shared a follow-up report provided by Arlene Poncelet, Dare to Dream Planning Committee Member (see attachment). BVR provided financial support in the amount of \$2,000 towards conference expenses, to include support for families with persons with disabilities to attend. The report includes a summary of the participant evaluations. There were a total of 213 people in attendance this year, 70 individuals were people with disabilities, 32 were family members, 18 were in the childcare portion, and 10 were

in the teen program; the remaining were persons working in the disability community. Elaine added that there was an eloquent speaker, Isaac Baldry, who has great enthusiasm and is an exemplary role model for people. He utilizes assistive technology to communicate and he is involved with the Youth Leadership Forum in his state. She suggested seeing him if you ever have a chance. It was noted that Dare to Dream is bi-annual, and the next conference will be held June 2014, and the planning committee is tentatively looking at either Aberdeen, Pierre or Watertown as a host site.

**RENEWAL Notice of Coalition Dues:** Staff shared they had received the Organizational Membership Dues Renewal Notice for the 2012 – 2013 from the SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. Staff noted that the Coalition's fiscal year started October 1<sup>st</sup>. Organizational dues are \$35. Robert Kean stated that he thinks the Board should renew, and that as a valuable partner and resource, we need to ask to stay better connected with the activities of the SD Coalition, such as the Disability Advocacy Network, Disability Policy Summit, statewide ADA trainings, and so on. **MOTION TO SPEND A TOTAL OF \$150, OF WHICH \$35 AS ORGANIZATIONAL DUES, AND THE BALANCE OF \$115 AS A DONATION TO THE COALITION – MSC.**

**NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH (NDEAM):** Staff shared a handout from an Associated Press article about October as NDEAM. The twelve events planned around the state were listed. Staff shared a copy of the Governor's Proclamation (see attachment) officially claiming October NDEAM month in SD. Most of these activities take place as partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation offices, Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) chapters, Chambers of Commerce, etc. And they range in variety from awards ceremonies with lunches, trainings, featured speakers or more. These events are great for networking and building future relationships. Grady reminded BVR members they are welcome to attend an NDEAM event in their area, and to contact staff for assistance getting registered and/or obtaining travel reimbursement.

**EMPLOYER RESOURCE NETWORK (ERN) –** Kathy Hassebrook explained that it's been several years in the making, and while ERN has a stronghold in Aberdeen, they've now expanded statewide by utilizing the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) chapters, focusing on diversity as the key. Through SHRM's assistance, ERN has grown, picked up strength, built relationships with area business employers, HR people and area VR offices. Some of these relationships were rare prior to this. The five towns that have an ERN presence are 1) Aberdeen, 2) Brookings, 3) Sioux Falls, 4) Yankton, and 5) Rapid City. Several towns are still

working on getting involved are Pierre and Watertown. Kathy added that she will be presenting on ERN at the State SHRM Conference coming soon. They will be looking for other funding methods for future growth, possibly some expanded level scenario where there is money involved, and to spend it on diversity topics. Kathy explained that she had stepped back from the on-going workings of the Aberdeen ERN and is very pleased to see it is still striving and sustaining, proof that the model can work if people work it.

Barb stated this sounds like a good fit for Rapid City which is large enough to have a variety of HR groups and employers. Kathy replied that her contacts with Marjorie Helgeson with the Rapid City VR Office are going well; it needs a person within that community to make the connections. Robert praised both Kathy and ERN, adding that he sees their efforts growing around the state and it is helping build relationships that will affect the employment of persons with disabilities. Elaine also encouraged members to offer assistance in their communities to help this effort to grow.

As Chair, Elaine recessed for the afternoon, with a reminder of meeting at 8:30 am in the morning.

**8:30 AM, Friday, September 28th, 2012.** The meeting was reconvened by Elaine Roberts, Chairperson. She welcomed everyone and asked for introductions. She asked members to note what they do, and what role they serve on the Board for Scott Kwasniewski, Department of Labor and Regulation, who joined the meeting.

**NATIONAL CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE (NCRC)** - Scott Kwasniewski thanked Elaine and members for allowing him this opportunity to share an update on the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and what is happening in the state since they presented several meetings ago. Scott explained that staff shared with him the questions or concerns raised at the June meeting. One was regarding concerns that employers were already filtering applicants and turning away applicants with anything less than the Gold Standard; and he assured the group he would address that question yet this morning, but he wanted to start from the beginning.

Nation Career Readiness Certificate is a portable, evidence-based credential that measures essential workplace skills and is a reliable predictor of workplace success. Those skills are measured using the WorkKeys® Assessment System created by the Workforce Division of American College Testing (ACT) which measures real world

skills in response to employer needs. These WorkKeys® Assessments have the categories of Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, Applied Technology, Teamwork, Workplace Observation, Listening for Understanding, Writing, and Business Writing.

Currently 42 states are using this program, and we issue a “National” certificate in SD. Participants complete three main skills sets that fall under Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information. All jobs need at least some of these basic three skillsets. There is also a newly added area “Soft Skills Set”, but it is not available yet in SD.

Scott noted that the actual certificate has been updated and there is a login ID, and user password for an individual to go online and create an URL link and make available from an electronic resume.

The Assessments: each unit averages only 55 – 60 minutes. Some folks have an employment goal in mind when they take these tests. Others take the tests to learn what careers best match with their scores. The ACT workforce database has over 19,000 careers carefully dissected to line up with skills needed. Others take them as pre-tests to learn what to brush up on and they can get referrals to educational centers, adult learning education sites, etc. to get further help. For example, language is a huge barrier in some towns; we’re becoming more and more diverse with small ethnic communities within communities, and have English as a Second Language (ESL) issues to tackle first.

Scott reported that 1,472,744 NCRC certificates have been issued nationally:

- 6,303 (or only 0.43%) have been the highest Platinum Level,
- 286,711 (or 19.47%) have been the Gold Level,
- 819,931 (or 55.67%) have been the Silver Level, and
- 359,799 (or 24.43%) have been lower level Bronze.

Scott reported that 3,025 NCRC certificates have been issued in SD:

- 40 (or only 1.32%) have been the highest Platinum Level,
- 1,121 (or 37.06%) have been the Gold Level,
- 1,597 (or 52.79%) have been the Silver Level, and
- 267 (or 8.83%) have been lower level Bronze.

He also noted that of those cases, 34 were specifically referred to them by VR counselors. The assessments cost about \$6 each, or \$18 total. These costs are covered by Department of Labor and Regulation and for the people referred there

by VR, the Division covers those costs. If a person is referred by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) the assessment is paid by DSS.

Scott also explained that they are trying to recruit more employers to teach us about their jobs – job profiling – look at the position, see what is required and observe people in those positions for a day. There are currently three trained job profilers, 1) Sherry Duke, Yankton; 2) Larry Porterfield, Rapid City; 3) David Johnson, Aberdeen. They are profiling job positions to include basic and detailed duties and the skill requirements needed to perform those jobs successfully. State agencies are also utilizing the Key Train Assessments (i.e., Department of Transportation, Department of Education, Bureau of Human Resources, and Corrections).

A member inquired if there are accommodations available to persons who take these tests, and if so, are they made common knowledge? Scott explained that these are available online and that yes, persons can be allowed an accommodation of doubling the allotted time of 55 minutes, and taking it in writing vs. online. Accommodations are explained on the ACT website, and that the person has to ask for an accommodation. A question was raised about employers wanting individuals with the higher level certificates, and Scott replied the employer would then run into issues with hiring overqualified employees. DOL is also providing customer service training for staff across the state. Individuals also need to learn how to communicate their scores with potential employers to highlight their scores and other qualifications. Members expressed excitement with the project especially with the collaboration between state agencies and the work in the schools with the number of students taking the assessments. Elaine thanked Scott for the presentation, and complimented the Department on the work done so far and noted hearing that more will continue working with employers and the public.

#### **DRAFT PROVIDER SURVEY INSTRUMENT – REVISITED AGENDA ITEM:**

Bernie handed out a draft provider survey instrument. He explained that the Division is attempting to obtain a better idea of what the training needs are for providers that the Division purchases services from. This could include job coaches, job developers, Centers for Independent Living staff, etc. The Division sponsors the Fall Conference every year in addition to providing training through webinars and DDN. The Division wants to identify training needs, most appropriate training format, and examine barriers for attendance. A workgroup is involved in this process and they are also exploring offering continued education credits, or a financial incentive to providers with more credits. Bernie added that the Division of Developmental Disabilities is also exploring the training needs of providers they work

with. Bernie asked members to review the draft survey instrument and provide feedback to the Division. Some suggestions offered at this point included: add contact information if there are questions, have providers participate on the conference planning teams, indicate a deadline on the cover letter or email that goes out with the survey instrument, and provide a “prize” for completing/submitting the survey. This will be reviewed with the Consumer Services Committee once again before moving forward.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Robert brought forward several voting items to share with members including: Voting action planner, flyer explaining how to vote (registering, what identification is needed to vote, ways to vote, and election dates), dealing appropriately with voters with disabilities, and poll worker training disability etiquette handouts. He also provided a 2012 Ballot Questions’ handout from the Secretary of State’s office. He encouraged members to share the information with others, and to make copies if need be. He also spoke to a persons’ right to vote and the only person that can decide if a person lacks the capacity to vote is a judge. If a guardianship exists, it doesn’t automatically eliminate the person’s right to vote. He also talked about persons with felony convictions and probation and how that may impact the person. If there any questions, people can call South Dakota Advocacy Services (800-658-4782) for more information.

**CLOSING ACTIONS:** Future Agenda Items: time allotted on the agenda for brainstorming as suggested by Laurie Gill; Disability Employment Initiative grant; updates on Liz Fabiano’s training, RSA Review, on-line job application processes, survey of parents of children with hearing loss; more detailed report of the Division’s budget, any proposed legislative bills coming from DHS. Scheduling Next Meeting: Members chose Chamberlain as their first choice and Pierre as the second choice on December 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. **MOTION TO ADJORN THE MEETING AT 10:50 AM – MSC.**